

## Comment by the Editor

### *THE LURE OF HOPE*

It began at El Alamein and Stalingrad. Since last winter a continent has been cleared of the enemy and the European Fortress itself is beginning to crack. Talk of peace and rumors of internal disorder are broadcast eagerly. After continual defeat comes at last a year of victory for the United Nations. Hope of ultimate triumph soars high.

In the midst of the Civil War the forces of the Union won some decisive battles. After repeated defeats and months of disappointing preparation, success perched on the banners of the North. Grant took Vicksburg to clear the Mississippi and Meade turned back the Confederates at Gettysburg. Those great military achievements early in July, 1863, marked the turning point of the war.

A wave of optimism swept over the country. The hope inspired by the trend of events prompted editors to predict an early conclusion of hostilities. Rumors of weakening morale in the South encouraged wishful thinking, while skeptics who recognized that the Confederacy was still powerful and defiant were suspected to disloyalty. Actually the

war lasted nearly two years longer. The terrible battles of the Wilderness, Petersburg, and Atlanta remained to be fought.

The analogy between 1863 and 1943 as years of victory proves nothing as to the duration of the present war, but it does illustrate the universal lure of hope. That the future prospect seems more attractive than the present is undoubtedly fortunate, yet the reality is seldom as satisfying as imagination pictures it. Skepticism is likely to be closer to the truth. The progress of this age of science is founded upon inquiring doubt of the validity of wishful supposition. Hope is wholesome, but uncertain as a basis for prediction.

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